ALL ABOUT THE NSA

An activity book

Welcome

The National Security Agency is the largest and most secretive intelligence agency in the United States. Researching this activity book was difficult, and that's the way the NSA wants it. I am also definitely on a watchlist now, if I wasn't already.

I work for the NSA. You don't know who I am, and you don't need to, but I have the legal authority to track everything you do.

I'm Edward Snowden, former NSA subcontractor. In 2013 I publicly shared documents revealing massive illegal and unethical NSA surveillance programs. I currently live in exile.

I'm Senator Frank Church (D-ID). I led a senate investigation into the security state, revealing the existence of the NSA for the first time. As I was doing this, the NSA wiretapped my office.

I'm General Timothy Haugh. You don't know who I am, but as the incoming director of the NSA, I will impact your life in ways you aren't legally allowed to know.

History

The NSA was established in 1952 by President Harry Truman. But as an ordinary citizen you wouldn't have known it. In fact, nobody would have known it. Even the existence of the NSA was highly classified until 1975. Despite this, for much of its history the NSA had a much larger budget than the CIA. (Modern budgets are, of course, classified but it is believed that the CIA budget is now higher).

To this day, the NSA remains the most secretive of the United States intelligence agencies, and is arguably the least exciting. While the FBI and CIA kill people, the NSA surveils. They use computers, and most people don't really know how computers work. The fact that we can joke about how "the NSA could be watching us" is a reminder to their power. They could be watching us. And they probably are.

In this activity book you will find a series of activities exploring the NSA's history and the few instances where their missteps and overreach have become public knowledge. In the back of the book you will find the answers to the puzzles, and sources for further reading.

Have fun! (And try not to think about the horrors of our technological panopticon!)

Did you know?
NSA operations and programs are stylized as one word in all capital letters.

SHAMROCK

While today we might think of the telegraph as antiquated, Americans were still sending hundreds of millions of telegrams into the 1970s. All of the telegrams sent internationally were collected and monitored by the NSA, from before its founding in 1945 until 1975. Only a few people ever knew about the program. Into the 70s the NSA was processing 150,000 telegrams a month.

Crack the morse code below to see how they got the telegrams!

.-- .. - .... / ..-. ..- .-.. .-.. / -.-. --- --- .--. . .-. .- - .. --- -.

/ -... . - .-- . . -. / - .... . / .. -. - . .-. -. .- - .. --- -. .- .-.. /

- . .-.. . --. .-. .- .--. .... / -.-. --- -- .--. .- -. .. . ... / .-. -.-. .-

/ --. .-.. --- -... .- .-.. / .- -. -.. / .. - - / .-- --- .-. .-.. -.. /

-.-. --- -- -- ..- -. .. -.-. .- - .. --- -. ... / .- -. -.. /

... ..- -... ... - .- -. - .. .- .-.. / -.-. --- --- .--. . .-. .- - .. --- -. /

..-. .-. --- -- / .-- . ... - . .-. -. / ..- -. .. --- -. /

.. -. - . .-. -. .- - .. --- -. .- .-.. .-.-. /

A	·—	J	·———	S	···
B	—···	K	—·—	T	—
C	—·—·	L	·—··	U	··—
D	—··	M	——	V	···—
E	·	N	—·	W	·——
F	··—·	O	———	X	—··—
G	——·	P	·——·	Y	—·——
H	····	Q	——·—	Z	——··
I	··	R	·—·	0	—————

MINARET Decryption

Under the domestic surveillance MINARET, the NSA surveilled the communications. In 1962 this list included Americans travelling to Cuba. At the direction of President Johnson this grew to include anti-war activists, and it grew to include 1,600 under President Nixon, including journalists and civil rights leaders.

How did the NSA describe their own surveillance program?

4-9-19-18-5-16-21-20-1

2-12-5 9-6 14-15-20

15-21-20-18-9-7-8-20

9-12-12-5-7-1-12

Did you know?
In a substitution cipher, each letter is replaced with a number. In this puzzle, A=1, B=2, etc.

MINARET Watchlist

While most of the MINARET watchlist is still classified, there have been some public disclosures of big names like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Jane Fonda.

Can you connect the people to their jobs and a fun fact?

Benjamin Spock

Howard Baker

David Dellinger

Tom Hayden

Whitney Young

Eldridge Cleaver

Art Buchwald

Kathy Boudin

Washington Post humor columnist

Pediatrician, author and anti-war activist

Pacifist and conscientious objector

Students for a Democratic Society activist

Early leader in the Black Panther Party

Weather Underground member and professor

Social worker and director of the National Urban League

Republican Senator from Tennessee

Ronald Reagan's Chief of Staff

Advisor to Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon

Became a Mormon and a conservative republican

Cameo in Alfred Hitchcock's *To Catch a Thief*

Ambulance driver in the Spanish Civil War

Won an Olympic Gold Medal in rowing

Married to Jane Fonda for 17 years

Son would be recalled as San Francisco DA

The JELL-O Shot

In the 50s mathematician (and future satirist) Tom Lehrer was employed by the NSA as a number cruncher. During this time, he is credited as one of the concurrent inventors of the JELL-O shot, in order to get around restrictions around liquid alcohol on the military base.

Can you figure out Lehrer's original recipe for the JELL-O shot?

Brandy

Tequila

Rum

Vodka

Gin

Cherry

Celery

Orange

Strawberry banana

Church Committee Eavesdropping

In 1975, during the aftermath of Watergate, a Senate committee chaired by Frank Church (D-ID) investigated abuses by the intelligence agencies. This publicly revealed the existence of the NSA for the first time. During the course of this investigation, the NSA was actually surveilling Senator Church.

SP K NSMDKDYB 0F0B DYYU YF0B, DR0 XCK MYEVN 0XKLV0 SD DY SWZYC0 DYDKV DIBKXXI, KXN DR0B0 GYEVN L0 XY GKI DY PSQRD LKMU. XY KW0BSMKX GYEVN RKF0 KXI ZBSFKMI V0PD, CEMR SC DR0SB MKZKLSVSDI DY WYXSDYB 0F0BIDRSXQ: D0V0ZRYX0 MYXF0BCKDSYXC, D0V0QBKWC, SD NY0CX'D WKDD0B. DR0B0 GYEVN L0 XY ZVKM0 DY RSN0.

Did you know?
In a Caesar cipher, the alphabet is shifted several places. In this puzzle, the alphabet is shifted ten places, so A = K and B = L etc.

Posters

In 2018, a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the NSA led to the release of a series of posters the agency developed through the 50s and 60s to display in their office space.

You can find some examples on the next pages, that you can cut out and give to your friends. Make your own bizarre poster about our surveillance state below! Remember, make it ominous and more than a bit unsettling!

Doc ID: 6614848

SECURITY FEVER-catch it

Approved for Release by NSA on 04-17-2018, FOIA Case # 83661

Doc ID: 6614824

Approved for Release by NSA on 04-17-2018, FOIA Case # 83661

To:

From:

[THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN REDACTED BY THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY]

To:

From:

Please see your immediate supervisor to be diagnosed with “security fever”

Doc ID: 6614910

WHEREVER YOU GO...

Approved for Release by NSA on 04-17-2018, FOIA Case # 83661

Doc ID: 6614872

DON'T BLOW YOUR CLEARANCE ~~MIND~~ ON DRUGS.

Approved for Release by NSA on 04-17-2018, FOIA Case # 83661

To:

From: [REDACTED}

I am concerned about your drug usage.

To:

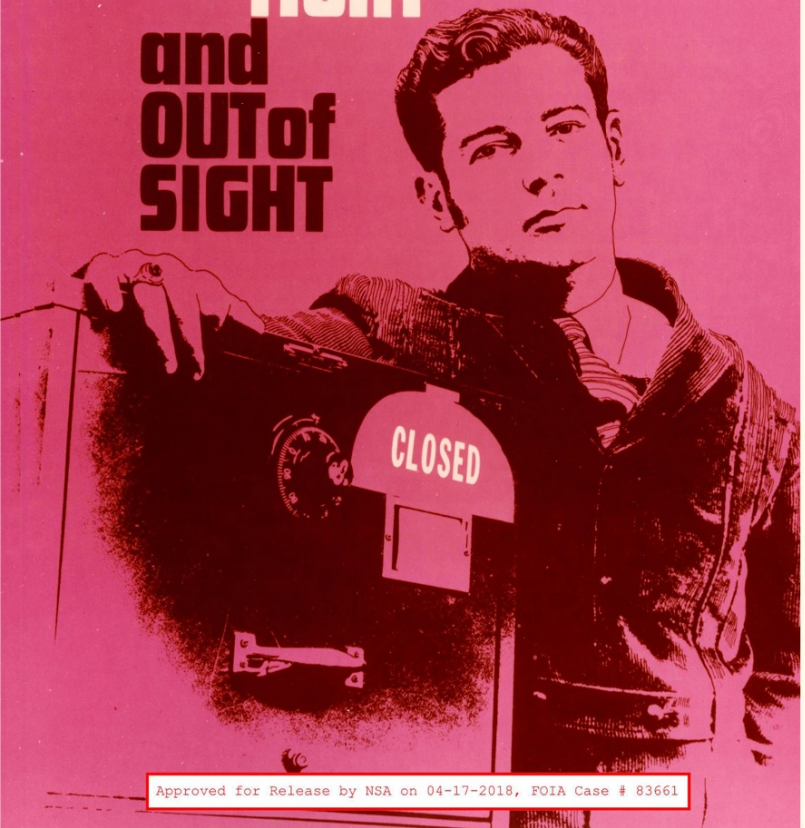
From:

I find your care in handling of sensitive materials admirable.

Doc ID: 6614788

NSA SECURITY EDUCATION PROGRAM 2-70

UP TIGHT and OUT of SIGHT



Approved for Release by NSA on 04-17-2018, FOIA Case # 83661

Doc ID: 6614877

This man will self-destruct...

ALCOHOLISM

shortens the abuser's life-span by 10 to 12 years

PRIVATE PROBLEM / PUBLIC MENACE

BESIDES HAVING A SHORTENED LIFE EXPECTANCY, THE ALCOHOLIC IS ROUGHLY TWICE AS LIKELY TO DEVELOP HYPERTENSION, ULCERS, OR CEREBROVASCULAR DISEASE, 29 TIMES AS LIKELY TO DEVELOP CIRRHOSIS OF THE LIVER, AND 58 TIMES AS APT TO COMMIT SUICIDE AS THE NON- ALCOHOLIC. MOREOVER, AN ESTIMATED 28,000 AUTOMOBILE DEATHS EACH YEAR INVOLVE DRINKING DRIVERS, AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, CAUSES ALMOST HALF OF ALL THE CRIMES IN THIS COUNTRY.

Approved for Release by NSA on 04-17-2018, FOIA Case # 83661

CONTACT YOUR AGENCY ALCOHOLISM PROGRAM ROOM 1CO31 PHONE [redacted]

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

To:

From:

I am concerned that your alcohol usage is shortening your lifespan.

To:

From:

I find you uptight, and slightly fruity, but I find respect the diligence of your handling of classified documents.

Doc ID: 6614908

BE A TIGER FOR SECURITY IN '67

Approved for Release by NSA on 04-17-2018, FOIA Case # 83661

Doc ID: 6614899

Approved for Release by NSA on 04-17-2018, FOIA Case # 83661

To:

From:

I have noticed classified materials unsecured in your work area. As a friend, I have opted to tell you in confidence before reporting you to administration.

To:

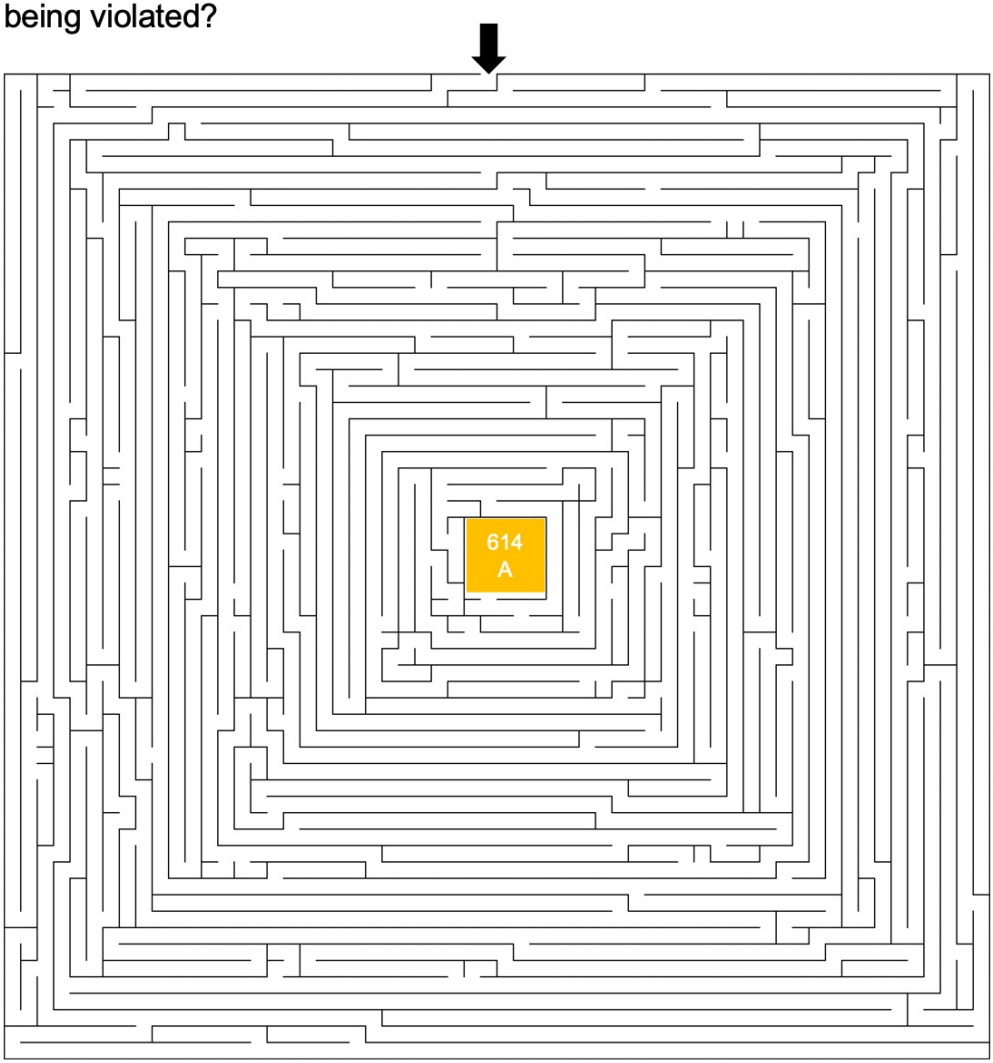
From:

You're a real tiger for security!
(whatever the hell that means)

Room 614A

In the heightened paranoia of the security state after 9/11, the NSA was authorized under the Patriot Act to collect the communications data of American citizens, including emails, telephone conversations, financial transactions and Internet activity all without warrants.

Room 614A was a telecommunications interception facility run by AT&T for the NSA beginning in 2003. Can you find your way through the corporate maze of the AT&T building to find your civil liberties being violated?



FISA Court

In 1978, Congress and President Jimmy Carter passed the Foreign Intelligence and Surveillance Act (FISA). This created a court of seven judges picked by the Chief Justice to serve a seven year term, whose job is to review government requests for warrants to authorize electronic surveillance for foreign agents or American citizens suspected of involvement in espionage. The court and their proceedings are held in secret.

From the court's creation in 1979 to 2017, the FISA court has reviewed 41,222 warrants. Each of the warrants below represents 1000 submitted warrants. Circle how many you think were rejected!

Phone Leaks

After 9/11, the NSA asked telecommunications companies to turn over customer data. In the following years, these requests would grow to include the personal data held by internet companies as well, under PRISM.

Which of these companies do you even remember? And which do you think handed over your data to the NSA?

Did you know?
The NSA isn't allowed to surveil US citizens domestically? They really aren't. Wild that they keep doing it.

Connections to Terrorism

Another feature of the post 9/11 NSA was, of course, Islamophobia. The NSA surveilled several prominent Muslim Americans in attempts to connect them with international terrorist groups.

Can you connect the wires to see which of these prominent Muslim Americans were actually connected to terrorist groups?

Faisal Gill
Policy Advisor
Homeland
Security

Hooshang Amirahmadi
Professor of
International
Relations

Agha Saeed
Founder of
the Muslim
American
Alliance

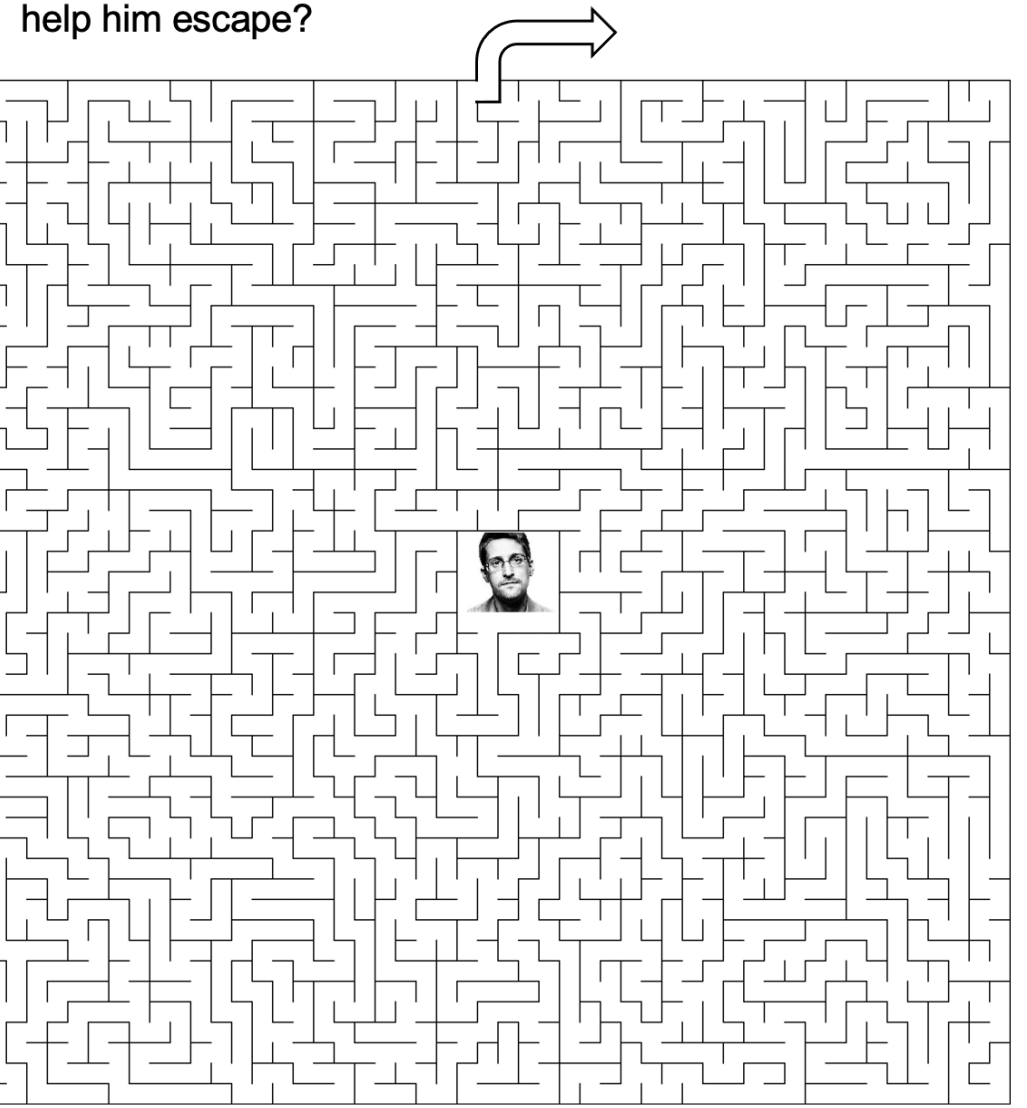
Nihad Awad
Executive
Director of the
Council on
American-
Islamic Relations

Al-Qaeda

Edward Snowden

In 2013, NSA systems administration subcontractor Edward Snowden grew increasingly concerned with the illegality of some of the NSA surveillance programs. After failing to find internal accountability, Snowden leaked tens of thousands of classified documents to journalists, revealing the true nature of the NSA surveillance.

Snowden fled to Hong Kong and then to Russia. Can you help him escape?



BOUNDLESSINFORMANT

Is an NSA tool that has been used globally to extract data and metadata about computer web traffic including the To: From: and CC: fields of email addresses and IP address.

Shade in the countries in **RED** you think were the most surveilled the most.
Shade in **YELLOW** the countries that are surveilled a moderate amount.
Shade in **GREEN** the countries you think are hardly surveilled at all.

Did you know?
Most of the data we have about the NSA is from the 2013 Snowden leaks, so that is where this data came from

TAO Catalog Wordsearch

The NSA's elite group of hackers, Tailored Access Operations (TAO) maintains a catalog of hardware and software hacks available to the NSA.

See if you can find them!

O D D R N H K Y H X L Q L L E
S Z N N K U N R S Y P B X V I
S F Z A M X D V U R G D A O D
A Q T K T Z J I I F A N E V V
C M H O O S P G S Q K B L A G
I V H C T Q T L X R K O G D U
P R C M V E H H E R D Q N F J
Q O D E K D G B G Q G L A V L
N R H J N O M H Q I T H J R U
K D Y H O O V Y O T N U X X A
P J L C S U R L Y S P A W N G
P Z K Q D E V C F P T E W U V
E Z I X U I W F X Q O L Q Y R
A M C K U R H D R H J T Y R Z
R X Y E R W R G B E E D H Q I
Z T Y Y I S M N T G K G Z E J
H P S S M L Y P X U T O T E K
V A U C Z E L B N D F K B Y C
C H W O L O A V Y I K T H P H
E V V R W G J R X F F I N H F
R H X E E L G U K U M S R D S
R A D N E L A C Y E K N O M A
C C L G H J T P X D P Q K K C
K T U F E J M D O J M V Z X R
T Z B N C P M K E D D N W W Q

JETPLOW- Creates a backdoor in firewalls

MONKEYCALENDAR- Transmits a mobile phone's location via hidden text message

NIGHTSTAND- Installs Microsoft Windows exploits from up to eight miles over a wireless connection.

PICASSO- collects mobile phone location data and eavesdrops

SOMBERKNAVE- controls Windows XP systems so they can be remotely controlled

SURLYSPAWN- Monitors keystrokes even on computers that are not internet connected.

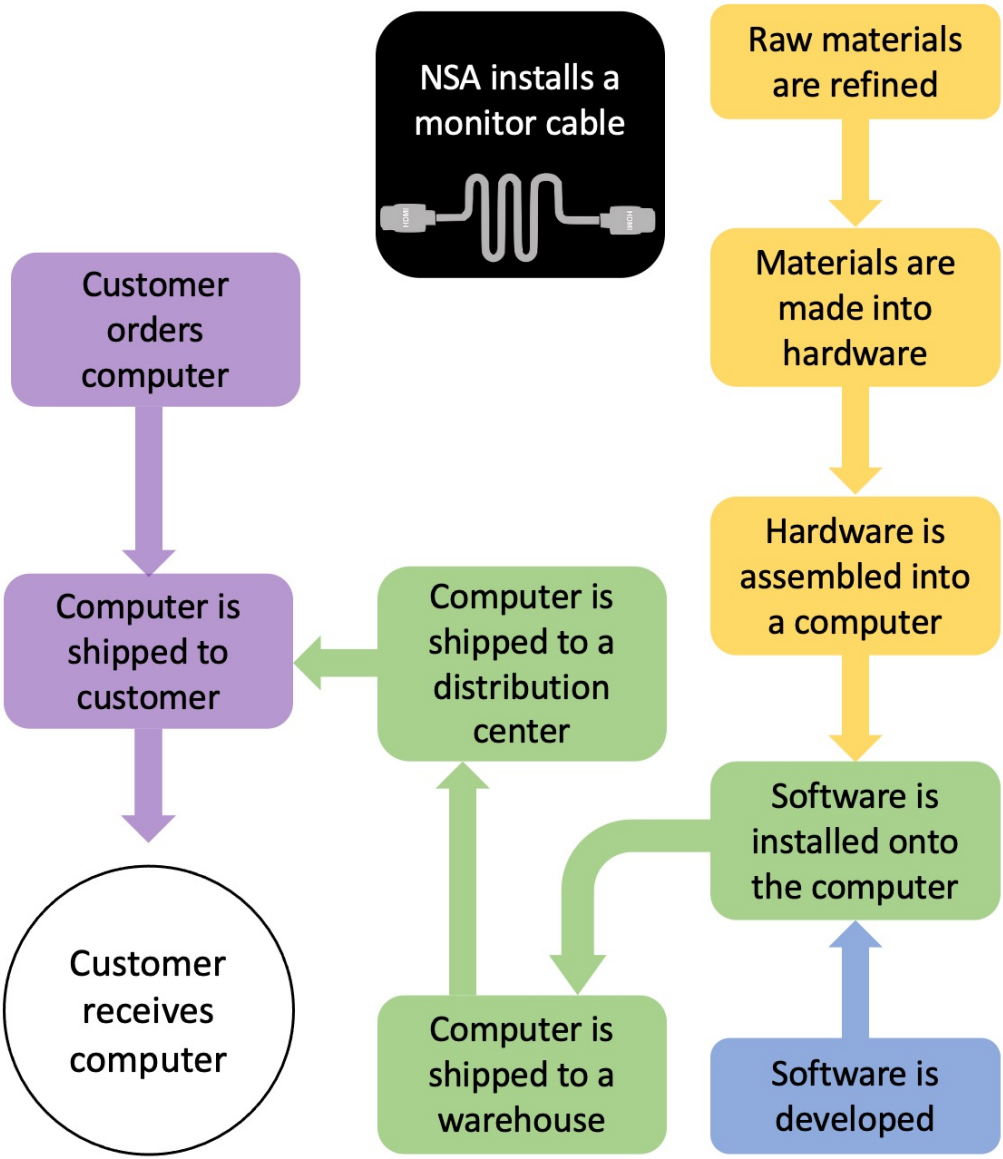
TOTEGHOSTLY- implanted on a Windows mobile phone allowing full remote control.

XKEYSCORE- collects and analyzes real time internet data

Package Interception

One of the specials tools in the TAO catalog is adding malware to a computer or router before they are received by a specific customer.

Below is a monitor cable, that allows TAO personnel to see what is displayed on the monitor. At what point in the computer assembly process would you install the cable? Draw an arrow to connect it.



Operation Dunhammer

One of the revelations from Snowden's leaks was that in association with the Danish Defense Intelligence Service, the NSA had been spying on allied world leaders.

Can you name the countries whose leaders the NSA was spying on?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

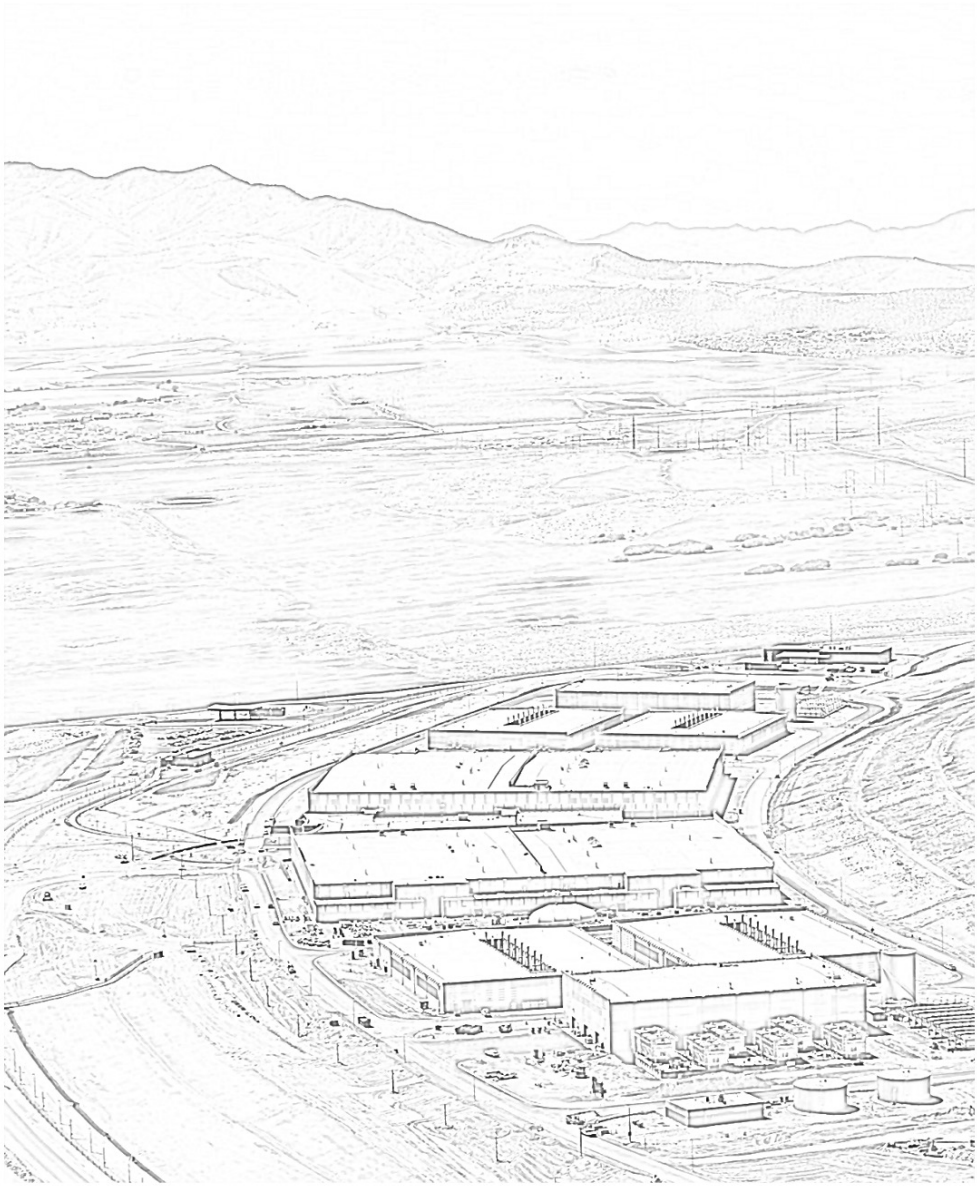
8.

9.

Bumblehive

The NSA operates a massive data storage center in the Utah desert codenamed Bumblehive. It's purpose is, of course, classified and it cost more than $1.5 billion to build in 2014.

Can you color in the data center? Don't forget to add the 128 million gallons of water the center uses annually!



In Conclusion

This activity book is non-exhaustive. We didn't get deeper into the PRISM surveillance, and we didn't mention LOVEINT, the formal name for the program through which intelligence service employees spy on their love interests or spouses.

Most of the activities in this book come out of the three instance of public accountability the NSA has faced. The most consequential was probably the Church Committee, which pulled them out of the shadows, which they continuously resent.

The post Patriot Act surveillance revelations have not had a lasting impact. Our government needs to manufacture continuous emergency in order to give itself emergency powers, and that ratchet only goes one way. President Biden asked Congress to extend the authorization for warrantless surveillance in February.

The Snowden leaks are the reason that most people today know about the NSA, but didn't lead to any meaningful accountability. In the ten years since, the surveillance tools have gotten more advanced and less accountable.

As always, there's not really a positive note to end this on.

Stay safe out there. And probably start using TOR.

(But also don't be lured into a false sense of security by using TOR)

Answer Key: SHAMROCK

How'd they do it?

WITH FULL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL TELEGRAPH COMPANIES. RCA GLOBAL AND ITT WORLD COMMUNICATIONS AND SUBSTANTIAL COOPERATION FROM WESTERN UNION INTERNATIONAL.

You don't need a warrant if the companies hand over the data!

Sources
- James Bamford. 1982. *The Puzzle Palace*. Penguin Books.
- Frank Church, et al. "Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities" 1976.
- Bruce Schneier. 2007. "Project Shamrock" Schneier on Security.
- L Britt Snider. 2006. "Unlucky Shamrock: Recollections from the Church Committee's Investigation of NSA"

MINARET Decryption

The NSA said MINARET was:
"Disreputable, if not outright illegal"

Source:
- Matthew Aid and William Burr, 2013 "Secret Cold War Documents Reveal NSA Spied on Senators." Foreign Policy Magazine.

The JELL-O Shot

Lehrer's original recipe was vodka and orange JELL-O. The NSA was still classified at the time, Lehrer told people he worked on the atom bomb.

Sources
- Jeremy Bernstein. 2020. "Quantum Profiles" Oxford University Press
- Jeremy Manzer. 1996 "Tom Lehrer, the Political Musician That Wasn't."

MINARET Watchlist

Benjamin Spock- Pediatrician- Olympic gold medalist
Howard Baker- Republican Senator- Reagan's chief of staff
David Dellinger- Pacifist-Ambulance driver
Tom Hayden- Students for a Democratic Society- Jane Fonda
Whitney Young- National Urban League- Advisor
Eldridge Cleaver- Black Panther- Mormon
Art Buchwald- Humor columnist- Cameo'd in *To Catch a Thief*
Kathy Boudin- Weather Underground- Chesa Boudin's mom

Sources
- Thomas Blanton. 2006. "Wiretap Deja Vu" National Security Archive
- Matthew M Aid and William Burr. 2007. "Disreputable if Not Outright Illegal" National Security Archive

Church Committee Eavesdropping

Church said: If a dictator ever took over, the NSA could enable it to impose total tyranny, and there would be no way to fight back. No American would have any privacy left, such is their capability to monitor everything: telephone conversations, telegrams, it doesn't matter. There would be no place to hide."

Source:
- Frank Church, et al. "Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities" 1976.

Posters

I promise you these are all real actual posters and I did not make any of them up.

Sources
- GovernmentAttic "National Security Agency (NSA) security/motivational posters from the 1950s and 1960s"
- Angela Chen. 2018. "There's a vintage NSA poster for everyone" The Verge.

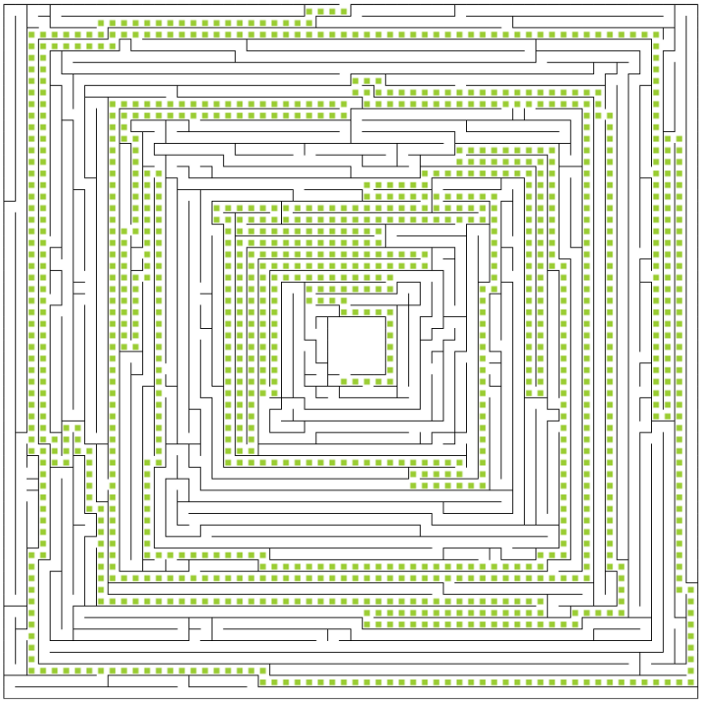
FISA Court

Of the 41,222 requests, 85 were rejected. This is less than .21%

Sources
- FISA Court Annual Reports
- Andrew Crocker. 2023. “The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court Has Made a Mockery of the Constitutional Right to Privacy.” Electronic Frontier Foundation,

Room 614A

Sources
- Ryan Singel. 2007 “AT&T ‘Spy Room’ Documents Unsealed.” Wired
- “Room 614A” Frontline



Phone Leaks

Only Qwest did not cooperate.

Sources:
- Declan McCullagh. 2006. “Some companies helped the NSA, but which ones” CNET
- Catherine Rentz Pernot. 2007. “The NSA and the Telecoms” FRONTLINE
- Glenn Greenwald. 2013 “NSA collecting phone records of millions of Verizon customers daily.” The Guardian.
- Glenn Greenwald. 2007. “Telecom amnesty would forever foreclose investigation of vital issues.” Salon.

Did you know?
Glenn Greenwald used to be a real, respected journalist before becoming a right wing, anti-trans crackpot!

Connections to terrorism

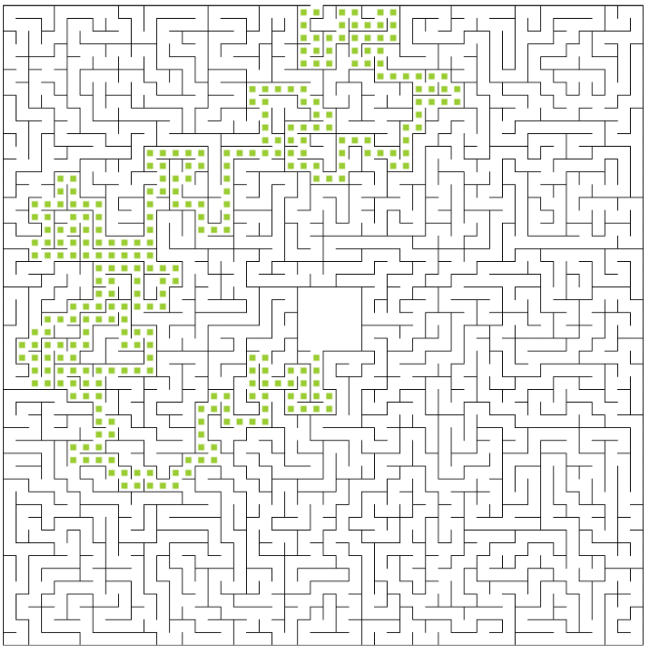
You can't connect them. Of course you can't connect them. Also notably, this NSA surveillance was email based, not phones, but that's not as visually interesting.

Sources

- Saher Khan and Vignesh Ramachandran. 2021. "Post-9/11 surveillance has left a generation of Muslim Americans in a shadow of distrust and fear." PBS Newshour.
- Leila Rafei. 2021. "How the FBI Spied on Orange County Muslims And Attempted to Get Away With It" ACLU.
- Glenn Greenwald and Murtaza Hussain. 2014. "Under Surveillance: Meet the Muslim-American Leaders the FBI and NSA Have Been Spying On". The Intercept.

Edward Snowden

Today Snowden still lives in Russia, the United States still seeks to charge him under the 1917 Espionage Act, and does not consider him entitled to whistleblower protections, despite the surveillance programs he revealed being illegal.



Sources

- Ewen McAskill. 2023. "The Snowden Revelations Reconsidered" The Atlantic.
- Ewen McAskill. 2023. "'No regrets,' says Edward Snowden, after 10 years in exile" The Guardian.

Package Interception

The NSA intercepts the packages after the computer is ordered by the customer, and can install the malware before the customer receives it.
Sources:

- Von Jacob Appelbaum, Judith Horchert und Christian Stöcker. 2013.“Catalog Advertises NSA Toolbox” Der Spiegel.
- Ryan Gallagher and Glenn Greenwald. 2013. “How the NSA Plans to Infect ‘Millions’ of Computers with Malware” The Intercept.
- Connor Simpson. 2013 “The NSA Intercepts Laptops Purchased Online to Install Malware.“ The Atlantic.

Operation Dunhammer

1. Brazil
2. France
3. Mexico
4. United Kingdom
5. Norway
6. China
7. Germany
8. Spain
9. Sweden

Sources:

- Alina Maurer. 2021 “Danish Intelligence Service Involved In NSA Spying Scandal” The Reikjavík Grapevine

Bumblehive

The data center is not operating at full capacity, at which point it would use 1.7 million gallons of water per day

Sources:

- James Bamford. 2012. “The NSA Is Building the Country's Biggest Spy Center (Watch What You Say)” Wired.
- Pamela McCall. 2022. “Wasatch Front data centers are thirsty for water, and in a drought that’s a bad look” KUER.

Did you know?
Two other excellent sources that don’t tie to a particular activity are James Bamford’s *Body of Secrets* and Matthew Aid’s *The Secret Sentry: The Untold History of the National Security Agency*

For more information, please visit PuppetStudies.org